

THE HOLOCAUST
AND
OTHER POEMS

LINCOLN SONNTAG







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AND OTHER POEMS

BY
LINCOLN SONNTAG



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THE HOLOCAUST

1906

I

A CITY lay in slumber, save the few
Whom Duty roused to urge them on their
 way
To bring the meat, and give each one his due,
And thus the vigor for the work of day;
Or bring the tales of fields that distant lay,
Which lead our thoughts from things of home
 alone,
To gain a wider view of those who stay
At daily labor, tiring flesh and bone
To earn their welcome meed, with rising hopes
 and tone.

II

And those whose eyes were closed in daily
 rest,
What did they see in mind on yesternight,
But views of things to come at their behest
To fill their farther days with cherished light?
Nor doubt had they as morrow was in flight
A gain would come for labor, more or less;
For none had fear that Nature's arm would
 smite,
So many suns had sunk since last distress
Which shocked in city's youth —'twas lost in
 living's stress.

[1]

III

Amidst the stillness of the early morn,
But seldom broken by a sound of toil,
In countless hearts a sudden fear was born,
Which leaped to terror like when from its
coil
The serpent leaps to wound, too swift to foil;
For rocking, rending Earth had now her
day
To show her children, nearing time to moil,
That they with all their wisdom could not
stay
Her moving arm, relentless, heedless in its sway.

IV

But few the moments till the quaking ground
Became the scene of common thoughts of men,
Where all were one:— they heard the dan-
ger sound;
They felt the danger sway, again! again!
Then came the calm like that of ocean when
Its rage is lost, but only calm below:
Above the tongues of red were leaping then,
And licking forms of shelter, row on row,
Which though of steel and stone were doomed
to flame and glow.

V

Where was fluid which is friend of man,
 Save when it comes as Flood? 'Twas not at
 hand

To quench the tongues of scarlet, as they ran,
 And left the palls of blackness as a brand
 Of might to ruin burdens borne by land,
 Which stood within their path; for empty lay
 The iron rivers near, which could withstand
 The rust of years, but not the wrenching
 sway —

The mother of the flames, whose act ensured
 their day.

VI

And on this day the busy wheels were still
 Whose movement meant the workers' due re-
 ward:

No one had heart to labor with a will
 To gain his needed silver, nor his hoard
 To swell, as near him lay on handy board
 A maimed or fallen brother, nor as throngs,
 By flame impelled, were hasting with accord
 To find some friendly roofs untouched by
 prongs

Of eager, leaping fire — the soothers of their
 wrongs.

VII

Some found the roofs they sought, whilst
others trudged
Along the streets with loads until their limbs
Were weighed with weariness; but few were
judged
By Nature too severely, for the rims
Of flaming city showed that 'midst her whims
She marred man's works, but chose to still
preserve
Its greens, and lakelets holding to their brims
The crystal liquid that all life doth serve,
And jewels of the sky so lustrous in its curve.

VIII

And even those who wandered long and far
Found shelter where the living stream was
small:
Their country's standard was their guiding
star;
Their faith their land would aid them was
the wall
Which propped their hopes, and urged them
on, to fall
Exhausted on the couches laid for them;
And when they heard the morning bugle-call
Waft o'er the scene where War had ranged
his men,
Their love of country rose, that nought but
death could stem.

IX

And here within a structure reared to save,
 And not to slay, by kindly men were borne
 The maimed by Nature's deed, who turned
 and gave
 Their all to give — their thanks — who had
 been shorn
 Of things for life by crush and flame that
 morn;
 And none were lost from minds that knew
 their needs
 By art to aid the ill, though deemed forlorn:
 They felt the welcome balm that comfort
 breeds,
 Or sharpened steel which saves when nothing
 else succeeds.

X

While thousands rested, others knew no rest,
 But battled boldly with the foe, which fought
 With claws of heat and flame and seeming zest
 To drive them back, and prove their work was
 nought;
 And soon they saw that hope was found in
 thought:
 The rending mixture man had planned for rock
 To sunder till the yellow lumps he sought
 Were charmers of his sight, became the stock
 Which held their hopes midst views that gave
 so oft a shock.

XI

From morn to eve the streams of flame ad-
vanced —

A moment checked, then turned to other ways,
And on, and on; and soon as upward glanced
The waiting many, when the fading rays
Of solar light were lost to tired gaze,
They saw the image of a spreading light,
Which not designed by God, nor he whose
days

He plans for works that give a keener sight,
Roused visions of their hurried packings and
their flight.

XII

The city still possessed its verdant heights,
Far-distant from the path of running fire;
And those whose hearts were strong to sad-
d'ning sights,
But not from love to see all hope expire
In other clay, as fiends of old so dire,
They burned to know the limits of the fate
Of fruits of builders toil — to some their
pyre,—
And thought of scenes that might their eyes
await,
Of darting red midst black — a passing city's
state.

XIII

And meditating thus, they found the slopes,
And climbed them with the ease that comes
 from loss
Of thought of self: — they saw their stars —
 their hopes,
Bedimmed by veils of red, which rose from
 dross
Left by the dread transformer as across
The vaunted walls it swept, and made the
 night
A wide expanse of light and flame, to toss
In moods of winds, which drove the brands in
 flight,
And gave each eye a view of Nature's aid and
 might.

XIV

Their time for rest was passing — still they
 gazed,
With doubt remaining tenant of each mind;
They changed their facings as the structures
 blazed;
They knew not where the end would be defined,
Nor where the growing homeless, tho' resigned,
Would meet a hand to greet them, and to show
A place for weary limbs, to leave behind
The seas of surging red, their loads of woe;
But Pity gave what Doubt would never seek
 below.

XV

Our circling globe begot the second day,
 But would it turn a flood of golden light
 Upon the city with a fiend at bay,
 To turn to rising hope the lingering fright
 That rose from crumbling walls, which veered
 the sight

Of those who saw, but could not linger near
 The smoking piles — reminders of their
 plight?

This none could answer, for no bars to cheer
 Appeared to end the Red Destroyer's might to
 sear.

XVI

But when the second eve assumed its hue
 The weakling hope of strugglers 'gainst the
 flames,

Gained strength from thoughts arising from
 their view:

Ahead they saw a way which early aims
 Had given width — the pride of many names;
 And here where stood adorning works to
 shield,

The many knew what gave the course its
 fames;

But who had thought some day would stand
 revealed

Its greatest good — a wall, so long from them
 concealed?

XVII

The ground was chosen then the fiend to hem ;
The brave defenders hurried to the scene ;
For flames were nigh, and none could now con-
temn
The foe as driven by its ally keen
Toward the fated way, which lay between
The smoldering piles, the standing piles to
fall,
And roofs for thousands yet, they hoped to
screen ;
And when they neared these shelters wide and
tall,
They felt the zeal to save when sudden perils call.

XVIII

The flames swept forward to the battle line :
They found their shattered food but here and
there ;
Their weak attempts denoted their decline,
As darting o'er the field so wide and bare,
Their tongues found nothing in the morning
air
To form a base from which to leap ahead
Upon the chains of homes and spread de-
spair ;
For there the guards had razed the fringe
which bred
A fear in hearts of those who from the scene
had fled.

XIX

The flames are dying now to leap no more;
Not e'en the driving winds can aid them now;
And they who nerved to effort ran before
Their sweeps, and gave what nature could
allow
In brain and flesh, and thus fulfill their vow
To save the roofs beyond, now gained the
rest
Which comes with thoughts that give a placid
brow,
To rise on morrow fresh for further test —
To help in needful work that rises from the
breast.

XX

The shattered pavements feel the weight of
life,
But not of anxious steps: — the danger past,
The ramblers pass to gaze where once were
rife
The hum of trade, or songs of praise which
cast
The heat of cheer midst ills of man that last;
And soon the cars shall dash along the ways,
To help in days when pressing tasks are
vast —
The workers know what gives their strength
its stays,—
He fresh must come to labor who his best essays.

XXI

Flames yet are darting in the open air,
But not of yesterday — a former ill
May be a present good — some floods may
bear
New life to fields when stored to feed the
mill;
And so each friendly little flaming hill
Upon the pavements, served to give the form
To things of earth and sea we gain by will,
For daily use our frames to nourish and to
warm,
Which here alone 'twas safe to urge in time of
storm.

XXII

Behold! a living line is moving slow;
Its links are those who now are seeking bread;
They have no minted metal, nor can know
The way to gain it,— still they feel no dread,
As they believe that by their hearts are led
Their helpers hasting with their timely aid;
Their comfort is their vision near ahead;
They know that all are judged of even grade,
That breath alone will gain a loaf of pleasing
shade.

XXIII

'Tis night and darkness fills the precious
homes,

Not e'en a taper sends its feeble light;
No sound is heard, save of the guard who
roams

The ways of desert stillness, where his sight
And eager ear lead on to trust midst blight
Of recent days, that still gives thoughts of
ill;

But ready hands will soon exert their might,
And give the veins of streets their fluid fill:
'Twill rouse the trust in those whose bell will
hope instill.

XXIV

The welcome day shows scenes of many things,
But they are stripped of former fullness now:
They waken views of works of toilers' kings,
Which had the form their wisdom could al-
low

To fill their aim their city to endow;
And they behold the ribs and dross now
cold —

The leavings of the flames — and give their
vow:

These shall not be the beds of spreading mold,
But shall be lost in piles far grander than the
old!

XXV

The ramblers onward move, their gaze aside:
They see the twisted beams which hold the
eye;
They have an inward view of halls where
pride,
Or winter's chill, once thousands urged to
buy
The coats of beasts by man ordained to die,
To yield what Nature gave, and yield for
gold;
Or gain the raiment wondrous mills supply —
The fruits of fancies that within them hold
Such charming beauty leaves or wings can scarce
unfold.

XXVI

How stands the hollow square of baser clay,
Which shock and flame had dared to over-
throw!
They laid its earthy blocks in distant day
To bear the onsets that would lay them low;
Its name aroused an image of the show
Its portals hid when heard within the land,
And e'en on foreign shore; and to bestow
Whate'er the flesh of travelers might demand,
Was here the thought of those who daily stood
at hand.

XXVII

A cluster looms whose stems are widths of
streets ;
Its shells held fountain-heads of streams of
news,
Which with the rising sun sent tales of feats
And other deeds as seen in rapid views,
To meet the eyes such yearning to peruse
Ere daily labor claimed them as its own ;
And giants struggling soon to win or lose,
Drew thousands here to read their fates as
thrown
Upon the walls mid cries of joy for one alone.

XXVIII

A chest is standing where it stood for years :
'Twas wrought by man to shield the precious
stores
He drew from rocky veins and calm his fears ;
Before is desolation, but its doors
Withstood the flames, as when the tempest
roars
In forest verdant giants, save the loss
Of leaves and branchlets on the leafy floors,
Remain as yore ; and so, although its gloss
Was lost in fiery blast, 'twas but the value's
dross.

XXIX

An endless desert an oasis holds :
Upon it rests a pile whose columns tall
Give thoughts of Greece ; within the dies and
 molds,
And bars of gold and silver, and the mall,
Are tokens of the art whose fruits intrall
The world to Toil, to gain what life requires ;
And here the sheen of mintage large and
 small,
With lofty motto that our faith inspires,
And emblem — sign of might — is what each
 eye admires.

XXX

Behold the ground that gave the city fame
For sights whose home was far across the
 sea !
Which washed the urban shore, and gained its
 name
From one whose bark found every side a lee ;
And there was oft the seat of tourists' glee,
Midst strains which fell but sweet on other
 ears,
That heard the first where grew the native
 tea ;
And odors there their impress left for years,
Where figures made by hands allayed the dwell-
 ers' fears.

XXXI

But broken walls remain of what was once
 The end of passages by foot and car,
 To forms survey bejewelled for the nonce,
 And feel the thrill from bird-like sounds of
 star;
 And lofty thoughts that time will never mar
 Were spoken on the boards the walls in-
 closed —
 They held the works of hands, which seen
 afar
 Gave them the semblance that the art pro-
 posed,—
 But what had all availed without the life dis-
 closed?

XXXII

A sign that gained in brightness in the sun,
 A golden sign, a sign that showed within
 The bearing roof what blessings could be
 won,
 Met gaze of many treading paths of sin,
 And led them on to worthy life begin —
 And still it stands, nor earthquake, storm,
 nor fire,
 Could change its form, or rend it small and
 thin,—
 Such sign shall stand for ages to inspire
 The flocks of Him who died thereon to lead
 them higher.

XXXIII

There was a spot which held the might to
mold
The city's youthful minds like potter's clay;
And there the chart of learning was unrolled
By those whose hearts were warm with those
in May
Of life and hope, and patient with delay;
And though the cherished spot is covered now
With leavings of the flames, which made their
way
Across the scene with ease of tilling plow,
A stouter pile for teaching shall the ground
endow.

XXXIV

This tale is told, and it shall be the last
To wake the feelings of a dreadful day
In thoughts of crushing sway and fiery blast,
That gave the city's hearts such deep dis-
may;
For ribs of steel in giants of the way,
Shall be their anchor when the earth shall
rock;
And watery caverns in the urban clay,
Shall be to flames' advance a certain block —
So stricken city, rise! and fear not further shock.

THE NEW WATERWAY

FOR ages have the waters thrown
Their futile strength against the band
Which links two lands, whose aims have grown
To move in progress hand in hand;
But shall the band be severed now
By muscle and device of man,
So that a haven-seeking prow
May point its way across the span?

Yes, yes, 'tis well. It shall be so:
For tireless man became aware
That but to will, was soon to know
The stubborn mountain rock to tear
With rending gases, and to move
The yielding earth in mighty loads;
Then gained the aids, and thus to prove
How quickly he could cleave new roads.

And soon no longer shall the sound
Of hammers' beating, nor the roar
Which marks the rending of the ground
Be heard above the channelled floor:
When gladsome waters rush to bear
The engined monsters of the deep
Across the neck in storm or fair,
Whose fruits the nations all shall reap.

O Great Canal of Western land!
Thy course shall see the course of trade:
The East, with day of rise at hand,
Shall send its wares of every grade
In streams unending through thy doors;
The West, whose eye shall see the needs
Of Asia's millions for its stores,
Through thee shall spread them and its creeds.

O Union, whose two ocean sides
Shall soon be joined in tropic land
By floating chains! the nation bides
That welcome day when thy command
Shall start their movement back and forth,
To draw the fruits from coast to coast
Of mill and ground, from South and North,
And give new life to every post.

And wisely guard the channel's gates
With giant tubes, whose flaming ends
Shall mean a closing sea awaits
The speeding form, whose sight portends
A landward bolt to wreck thy work;
For till the end of nations' greed,
That trait which 'neath some crown may lurk,
To meet its check, has power's need.

Yet nearer draws the day on earth
When wars will come as ages come,
With many years before their birth;
For roads on land where traffic's hum
Is never still, and roads for seas
To bear their loads from shore to shore,
As they increase become the keys
To nations' friendships more and more.

ADDRESS TO THE PRESS

O WONDROUS force for human weal,
Which spreads the thought that lights the
earth!

Our backward views to us reveal
The boons as given since thy birth:
The dread devices of the day
When tyrants ruled and feared no pen,
Could have no mortals as their prey,
For thou wouldst rouse the wrath of men.

And numbers fear thy searching light,
Who else would wrong their brother man —
They know thy power for the right
As risen since thy work began;
And thousands praise thee for thy aid
To ease their toil to gain their meed,
Whilst others find the pleasures fade,
Save thine alone, which fills their need.

Once man arose and went to rest
With thought of none beyond his eye;
To-day through thy untiring quest
He knows of fates 'neath distant sky;
And many thou hast saved from drifts
Which led to ill while yet in youth:
So now we praise thee for thy gifts
Of tidings, hope and worth of truth.

A PILGRIM'S SONG

Away from sounds of busy streets,
Away from trade and its deceits
To where the rural stillness charms,
And toil has gains, but none that harms.

I love to view the quiet scenes
Where tilling adds to Nature's means:
They teach me of the placid life —
Away from urban strains and strife.

And Nature has her kindest gifts
For those who wander from the drifts
Of human streams, to seek the health
That lies in groves untouched by wealth;

For man ere he bid learning's light
Illume his reason in its night,
With vigor long fulfilled his part
Without the aid of healing art.

And pleasure there is also found,
In verdant boughs and warbling sound,
That lights the love of rustic fruits —
Where wonders rise from slender roots.

And so preserve for future years
The balmy groves, each bird that cheers:
Such treasures add to living's worth
Of those who flee from urban dearth.

TO A CAGE-BIRD

O GOLDEN warbler of the home,
Thou wakest it to cheer;
Thou canst not fly 'neath seeming dome
Where other wings appear;
Thou canst not rock on springy boughs
With other breasts in glee,
Yet sweetest trills thy throat allows
Thou givest though not free.

The gilded threads that still thy wings
Thou knowest not are shields:
Thou yearnest for the forest swings,
Or yellow seedy fields;
But there thy shape might be thy woe,
For thou art but the share
Of other forms that thee but know
As plunder of the air.

Thou art so small, but yet so great
To rouse the love of man:
Though thou art dumb, thou dost relate
Thy joy as mortals can
In song beneath thy master's roof,
But not in play of moods —
Yes, songs of men might be the proof
Like thine of dearth of feuds.

O may the shields of each abide
 Be soon thy warblings' bounds!
To soften hearts of other mode
 Than such as seek thy sounds;
And if thy flesh must be confined,
 O give thee room to spring!
To yield thee gladness, though consigned
 To life with fettered wing.

WORDS OF CHEER

DISPEL the thoughts of former days
When sorrow lay within thy heart,
By turning to the cheerful rays
That e'er are near in home or mart.
Perchance some friend may be at hand,
Whose kindly words may lift the veil
Which hides thy view from things that stand
To urge thee on, and ne'er to quail;

But if no friendly face appear,
Then scan the printed words of Him
Whose voice the burdened roused to cheer,
Whose light once lit will ne'er grow dim,
But brightly beam in endless time;
For they will show the higher life
That lives for aye in prose and rhyme,
And solace gives when gloom is rife.

JOHN PAUL JONES

I

THIS fearless hero of the sea
When youth's impress his visage bore,
Beheld the snowy sails that flee
Mid shapes and tints that bound before:
These were the seeds of longing then,
Which had their growth in firm resolve
To guide some bark with arms of men,
And thus his plan of life evolve.

II

So soon he learned the sailor's art,
And then was heard his stern command
As o'er the main was borne to mart
The fettered slave, whose just demand
To live where lay his father's bones
Was answered by the biting scourge,
Whose cries for bread or feeble moans
Were futile like the voice of surge.

III

But when he twice had crossed the main
Upon a slaver's sullied deck,
He felt remorse's lingering pain,
Which nought but other views could check:
So then he fled to childhood's scene;
But here no task as sweet he found,
In busy town or meadow green,
As where the swelling billows bound.

IV

And here for trade he toiled again ;
But loathing now had turned his eye
From deeds which put a lasting stain
On names of lands whose boasts were high : —
No breathing cargo met his gaze
To cool the heat of daily zeal ;
He had resolved to course the ways
That yielded honor with his weal.

V

Farewell to thee, fair smiling Peace !
Thy tale is told ; now list to War,
Whose threatening look makes nations cease
Their plotting for a neighbor's shore ;
Whom dread Disease and Famine too
Oft follow with their ghastly bands ;
Whom ever near, but ne'er in view
Is Plunder with a thousand hands.

VI

America ! when thy hardy sons
Were struggling in oppression's gripe,
When they beheld great shotted guns
To fright them ere their plans were ripe,
What mortal born within thy bounds
With deeper anger burned than Jones ?
Whose days began where pibroch sounds
Could move men cold to other tones.

VII

But when at last the time had come
To drive the foemen from thy soil,
When quickening sound of rolling drum
Aroused thy camps the foe to foil,
Was there a man that heard thy cry
More willing then for thee to bleed
Than he, who owned ambition high,
Yet follow would if not to lead?

VIII

And burning for the rights of man,
How eager beat his heart for fray,
When hope to lead in battle's van
Was fed by sheet that 'fore him lay! —
This held the words of those whose trust
He swore to keep with lifted sword,
And ne'er to lay it till the just
Who gave it knew no foreign lord.

IX

A golden sheet now met his eye,
But not a sheet for him alone:
'Twas but to clasp, then hoist on high
To give it birth among the known,
Above the waves — to friend and foe —
His hands the first to place it there;
Its words and serpent's form to show —
How apt to him who loved to dare!

X

The *Alfred* and the *Providence*:
He climbed their sides for early deeds,
To speed their bolts for dread offense
'Gainst ocean bearers of the needs
Of those behind the foemen's shield;
And those who placed his threads of rank
Soon saw in him an aid revealed,
Whose arm was swift and counsel frank.

XI

His mandate as his driving force,
He left the shore where Freedom strove,
And braved the breakers in his course
To seek his prey in stream or cove:
He lit the skies with wave-washed oak,
Or spared the hulls with warming wares,
For barter where he might convoke
His helpers for their minted shares.

XII

He knew his duty, but his heart
Was master when his gaze was set
On those who had on sea their part,
To draw its life with prong or net;
He saw their mien, and then the clasp
Of welcome ere their humble fare —
These moved him to release his grasp
Upon their sails for homes so spare.

XIII

The *Ranger* — honor to the bold!
When wafted from the fading land
Where visions rose of feats foretold
By friends in arms, who knew his hand:
This captain held with vexing task
Of motley crew with spirit weak,
To bound and strike as he must ask
A foe to still, then else to seek.

XIV

As far as prow was here from stern
Was aim of helpers from his own;
For them the prize alone to earn;
For him the sea should hold like stone
The sails and guns of stubborn foe,
Though he might fall midst dimming hope,
He still a leading sword must show,
To give to Freedom greater scope.

XV

And he who saw his flag aloft,
But never sinking in defeat,
Beheld his men — to him not soft
For molding to his will to meet
Attacking blades with swifter steel,
Or rush the guns for level hail;
Yet gaining lastly by his zeal
In spirit needed to assail.

XVI

A sail arose within his sight
When near the land that gave it form;
He knew not if it held the might
To sweep his own with iron storm,
Or if beneath her placid deck
There lay but fruits that bless the earth;
But soon he saw what he must reckon —
The guns of foe; then battle's birth.

XVII

He saw a word — it yet was faint,
Until his sight declared it "*Drake*";
To him the sign was more than paint,
Though borne by sail his guns must rake:
It spoke of deeds to emulate,
But now he had no thought of names —
His eyes, his ears showed battle's state,
When strife was marked by crash and flames.

XVIII

How truly sped the weighty forms,
So swiftly rushed from *Ranger's* sides!
The *Drake* had never felt such storms
As came so oft from facing guides;
But oak was soft to iron then,
And flesh behind had nought to shield —
It tore her walls and limbs of men
To gain the flag they would not yield.

XIX

But they were driven by their wills —
They swore to hold it to the last;
But pluck alone no part fulfills
To save the day in battle's blast;
For art must lead when foes are brave,
And *Drake* had not what *Ranger* held:
A guide who skill to helpers gave,
And with it could his spirit weld.

XX

Oak fell from oak, and flesh from flesh
Till *Drake* was nigh the ocean's prey,
Or nigh the sport of breezes fresh —
A silent specter of the day:
'Twas then a voice rose from her deck
And then her emblem slowly sank,—
This marked her passing but a wreck,
But leaving still some hearts to thank.

XXI

The *Ranger's* hero could not leave
The scene of tasks with triumph crowned,
Without the helpless to perceive
To give them aid from Plenty's mound;
And here the needy fisher-folk,
Who braved the waves in time-worn shells,
Were gladdened with what none forespoke:
His gift of boats to breast all swells.

XXII

And giving *Ranger* stamp of fame,
 'Twas then his fate to leave her deck,
 And mount a sail whose very frame
 Gave doubt that boldness could not check;
 Whose forms to urge by breath alone,
 And forms to turn by arms of steel,
 Were but a part of what was shown
 As best to gain — a flawy keel.

XXIII

These were the tools the *Richard* bore
 That he must use in battle's test;
 He knew the foe had works in store
 And wedging now the sea in quest
 Of hostile ships, whose form was late
 And substance fresh from hewer's hands;
 But such his vim could not abate —
 He doubt must slight midst strife's demands.

XXIV

So onward now the *Richard* swept,
 Her course was laid by guess and eye;
 No gun-pierced hull could then have crept,
 As panther creeps when prey is nigh,
 To throw a broadside to surprise
 And give that keel a rocky bed;
 For one was watching mast to rise
 At line where sea and sky were wed.

XXV

A fleet of sail! A cry of chase!
 These gave the *Richard* spur of life
 To gain the quarry in the race
 That shoreward coursed sans deadly strife;
 But they were lost in sudden sight
 That stirred her crew with battle's calls:
 An oaken monster winged with white
 Appeared with menace in her walls.

XXVI

But as she sped so fled the day,
 And as she to the *Richard* bore
 To seal a thought that this was prey,
 "What ship is that?" was sent before
 To give the stranger instant call;
 No sound returned to waiting ear
 Save that of waves in rise and fall;
 So hail again! yet doubt was here.

XXVII

An instant more, then iron throats
 Of *Richard* gave an answering roar,
 With hail to pierce that prize of boats —
Serapis was the name it bore;
 But this was but a vexing sting
 To flawless hull of ready foe —
 It urged the aids of honored king
 To give for every blow a blow.

XXVIII

And Jones, who fought the *Richard's* plan,
 With chance to veer it like the wind,
 Soon after battle's storm began
 Saw distance here his hope had thinned:
 That firmer sides and truer guns
Serapis gave the greater force;
 That soon the sea must rush by tons
 To give his hull her final course.

XXIX

A gun lay here, a gun lay there,
 No more to flash with roar of death,
 And arms he trained and could not spare
 Were moveless now to sight or breath;
 Whilst hull that held them for his deeds
 Gave way to ocean's urge at last:
 These made for Jones a view as leads
 The stoutest heart to dread the vast.

XXX

To save the *Richard* in this plight,
 To be the victor nigh defeat,
 When Pearson joyous in his sight
 Hailed "Have you struck?" his chance to
 meet
 As leader of *Serapis'* crew —
 Then voice of Jones rang in reply
 That battle yet for him was new,
 To show that he would still defy.

XXXI

And then he swung the *Richard* till
 She lay in path of Pearson's ship,
 And flashed the guns that served him still,
 With bolts to wound, ere coming grip
 Of *Richard's* chains that bound the two:
 Now both must float or both must sink;
 The strong shall life of weak renew,
 And both shall form the combat's brink.

XXXII

A moment was the battle's pause
 As that of knights in clash of swords,
 Who battling for a sacred cause
 Must stop to meet the rush of hordes;
 Then burst the flames from facing guns
 To speed their loads o'er fronting floors;
 For here two flags must have their runs,
 But one to fly to parent shores.

XXXIII

Though Jones had cannons old and few,
 He yet had arms for hands below;
 His marksmen and his listening crew
 Were summoned for the final blow;
 They like the upward sweep of wave
 Rose swiftly at the duty call,
 To aid their chief the day to save —
 He who must win or else would fall.

XXXIV

They gazed aloft and saw their prey,
 Like eagles rising from their nests;
 The harvest-moon gave shade of day,
 While flash of guns that had their tests
 Gave added gleams for battle's work,
 That now was seen 'tween facing masts,
 And none did falter, none did shirk,
 As onward urged by trumpet-blasts.

XXXV

The decks were still a battle-field;
 A pit for forms that fell from heights,
 Where neither side had oak to shield,
 But all were full in heaven's lights;
 With steel to wield and lead to speed
 The combat raged around the spars,
 Till *Richard's* men attained the lead,
 And then were lone 'twixt hulls and stars.

XXXVI

Serapis had a shower now,
 But not to wash her crimson deck:
 'Twas one of lead to sweep her bow
 As well as stern with none to reck —
 It left brave Pearson here alone,
 Whose will was rod of flawless steel;
 But could he for more slain atone?
 Was this not time for Fate's appeal?

XXXVII

He knew his deck had been a wall
 To those that did his work below;
 He still felt force of Duty's call
 To charge his guns and flash a row;
 While Jones was sure of minutes few
 To add some blows the *Richard* gave —
 His captives led by faithful crew
 Had manned the pumps to halt her grave.

XXXVIII

The battle soon must have its close,
 With danger pressing every side;
 Now flames from oak as iron rose,
 And pumps were struggling with a tide
 As rising gave no moments pause;
 The hulls seemed shambles on the sea
 With throes that there no axmen cause —
 Who fell the beasts e'en ere the tree.

XXXIX

At last a shell of iron fell
 Upon *Serapis* from a height;
 Its bursting load gave starting knell
 To charges slumbering in their might,
 Which swept her decks 'midst rending rock: —
 Then but a moment Pearson gazed
 On human forms now cold to shock;
 Then hauled his flag so proudly raised!

XL

O dauntless Jones! O victor chief!
Exemplar of the will in art,
The tree is rising for the leaf
That bravest doers glow in heart;
Thy hand received a graven disc;
Its weight but earth, its lines of soul —
The nations know what brought thy risk,
Thy memory's life is more than scroll.

HELPERS AT THE WAYSIDE

WORKERS, toil that days may brighten;
Toil for youthful kin at play:
Beaming faces burdens lighten,
Though far-distant wends the way.

Hark! some workers now are singing,
While the iron waits their wills;
Then their anvils will be ringing
Till the sun has left yon hills.

When the desert sands are burning
As the camel-train sways on,
What the urge from homeward turning,
But the ease when day is gone?

Though life's sands be nigh to searing,
They will cool as evening falls;
When the day, its shadows nearing,
Soothes the way to temple halls.

THE STAR OF HOPE

O LUSTROUS star, so steady in thy light!
Though clouds may roll 'tween thee and mortal
view

So thou art faintly seen or veiled from sight,
The plodders know thy face will show anew;
For they are like the whiteness of the waves,
Which melts to leave the constant still below,
As thou art known to every heart that craves
A better prize than Fortune would bestow.

And gazing o'er the widening fields of Time,
We see what they that worked in rays of Hope
Have gained for us in treasured works sublime,
To mark the way to reach our livings' scope,
And gather fruits that from our labors spring —
Whose seeds shall rise with blessings from the
King!









